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AIS Players Make All-Europe Football Team



Sascha Miller-
Running Back



Brock Blankenship-
Linebacker



Michael West-
Lineman

By LaDonna Davis

Football season may be over, but for three AFNORTH high school students, the recognition that they've gained as being part of the All-Europe football team is an accomplishment that will live on forever.

Linebacker Brock Blankenship, sophomore; Lineman Mike West, senior; and Running Back Sascha Miller, senior, are just three of the many high schoolers all throughout Europe to make-up the highly competitive 2006 All-Europe football roster.

Each year, a selection committee consisting of coaches from Department of Defense Dependent Schools-Europe takes the best-of-the-best football players and make up what would be considered a Europe dream team based on each players statistics and positions.

Miller made his presence known to DoDDS Europe during the May lift-off as the second strongest player at the lift-off clocking the third fastest 40-yard sprint.

"Division III knew that AFNORTH was a title contender because Miller was ready to chase the rushing record and AFNORTH had five linemen committed to seeing the record fall," said head football coach, Greg Blankenship. "Unfortunately, a severe high ankle sprain at the start of the third game kept Sascha from running down the record."

However, Miller came back from injury and led AFNORTH to the Super-Six-championship game in

Baumholder, Germany. In the championship game, Miller showcased the speed and power that produce an amazing season average 10.9 yards per carry. During the 2006 season, Miller rushed for 913 yards on 84 carries.

West was recognized as one of the eight best defensive linemen in DoDDS Europe in 2006. He dominated on the line of scrimmage and made his coaches game scheme to double-team him throughout the contest.

"All coaches that prepared for AFNORTH during the playoff season commented that Mike never took plays off on defense and kept the backfield under constant pressure," Blankenship boast.

West had 27 tackles and three quarterback sacks in 2006, an amazing feat for any young player considering he was double-teamed every game.

Brock Blankenship led the AFNORTH defense with 87 tackles, three interceptions, and 11.5 quarterback sacks. He was chosen as one of the ten best linebackers in DoDDS Europe in 2006.

"Brock dominated the inside run game and forced the opposition to sweep and pass. He was double teamed by a guard and fullback on most plays and still found his way to the ball carrier," Blankenship proudly says about his son. "The opponents knew you had to slow down #27 on defense if you hoped to sustain a running game." Throughout the 2006 season, no opposing rusher gained 100

yards.

Making the All-Europe team is just the tip of the iceberg for these young men. For Miller, having an impressive high school football record is already creating buzz among some division II colleges who have shown an interest in him. For West, he's decided to follow in his parents footsteps and join the Air Force as a load master. And, for the youngest of the three All-stall players, Brock, the next two years of his high school football career could determine his future; though, if family history is a precursor, it wouldn't be surprising to see him on the Oklahoma State University field like his grandfather many years ago.

Though Blankenship played a critical role in leading the AFNORTH players to victory this season, he says that it was through the help of volunteers and assistant coaches that each boy was able to reach their full potential.

"Defensive Coordinator Frank Coston was responsible for the outstanding performance of Mike West and Brock Blankenship. He has instructed both young men on defensive techniques for the last two years and designed the defensive scheme that dominated the league," Blankenship said. Offensive Coordinator Terrance Barbary called the offensive plays for AFNORTH in 2006. Terrance relied on Sascha to move the chains and open up the passing lanes. Both coaches were instrumental in the development of all three young men."

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NEWS

Holiday Message from the Commander

Angela and I offer Season's Greetings and a warm wish of happiness to each of you for the holidays.

Thank you for everything you do throughout the year to support the Soldiers, civilians and family members of our Army and the entire community. We depend upon your experience, dedication and talent to accomplish our mission, and the hard work you do every day is vitally important.

I ask that you keep in your thoughts and prayers those who are less fortunate, and also those who are serving overseas during this holiday season. Many will miss the joys of spending the holidays with friends and family as they support the rebuilding of Iraq and Afghanistan, and securing a more peaceful future for our children. I encourage you to take the time to refresh your spirits, reconnect with family and friends, and reflect on all the wonderful things that we enjoy as free people.

Please be safe and consider weather, traffic, and holiday festivities that all present increased safety hazards. Consider these risks and take measures to protect yourself and your family. Get plenty of sleep before long drives, plan for delays, avoid driving at night or in poor weather, and use a designated driver if you plan on partaking in festivities involving alcohol.

The New Year promises many new challenges and opportunities for our garrison. I look forward to working with you to continue accomplishing our vital mission of supporting the military community. I hope you share my resolution for the coming year to continue making our garrison a "community of choice."

My family and I extend warm wishes for a safe and happy holiday, and wish you and your loved ones the very best. We look forward to seeing you return safely to take up the mantle of installation support in the New Year. Fijn Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar,

LTC Eric D. Tilley

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NEWS

Canadian Forces honor hospital's, Fisher House service to troops

By Dave Melancon

The Canadian armed forces recognized the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and its Fisher House for their services to its wounded Soldiers and their families with two of its highest awards Dec. 6.

Gen. Rick Hiller, chief of Canada's defense staff, awarded the hospital with the Canadian Forces Unit Commendation and presented the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service to the facility's Fisher House.

The unit commendation, equivalent to the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation and awarded only to military organizations, recognizes distinguished service by a Canadian or foreign military unit for service that goes beyond the demands of normal duty.

LRMC is the first foreign unit in 10 years, and only the third to be awarded the commendation since it was established in 1980.

The medallion is presented to non-military organizations for their service to the Canadian armed forces, Hiller explained.

The occasion marked the first time the hospital and its "home away from home" for families of wounded Soldiers received official recognition from another country's military.

Hiller praised the hospital's staff for their service to more than 100 Canadian Soldiers wounded in Operation Enduring Freedom. He said the award not only recognizes their medical skills but also their kindness — going beyond what is expected of medical personnel — to help his Soldiers "because it was the right thing to do."

"I am here to thank you for all that you have done, how you have done it and, most importantly, that when you did it, you did it with compassion," he said.

While the hospital staff treated Canadian Soldiers, the installation's Fisher House cared for their families, Hiller said.

"What Fisher House has done here to look after our families, getting them through some of the worst days of their lives, has been absolutely incredible," he said as he presented the medallion to Kathy Gregory, Landstuhl Fisher House manager.

"To be the first foreign organization to get this award is amazing,"



Master Cpl. Paul Franklin, 1st Field Ambulance, Canadian Forces, and his wife Audre, present \$82,000 to Kathy Gregory, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center's Fisher House manager, during a ceremony Dec. 6. Franklin lost his legs during a suicide attack near Kandahar in January and received treatment at Landstuhl. The Franklin family held a series of fund raisers in western Canada on behalf of the Fisher House.

Gregory said.

Care from the hospital and Fisher House teams enabled the wounded Canadians "to get better faster and reintegrate them with their families much more quickly, allowing those families to survive those stresses and strains that could otherwise tear them apart," Hiller said.

In addition to the official recognition, members of the Canadian military presented donations of \$121,200 to the Landstuhl Fisher House.

Pvt. William Salikin, 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Regiment, was in a medically induced coma during his weeklong treatment for internal head injuries he received during a suicide bombing attack near Kandahar in January.

His wife, Desirae, said the Fisher House staff ensured that she had as much time as possible with her husband.

"They had everything. The laundry was done, the cleaning was done. They provided toiletries, food and drink and somebody to talk to — anything you could possibly need," she said. "I never had to ask for anything. I could concentrate on being there for him."

"It is very much an honor and a tribute to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and civilians that care for wounded warriors to receive this award from the armed forces and people of Canada," said Col. W. Bryan Gamble, LRMC commander. "We are honored not only to serve our warriors but also those of our Canadian neighbors, friends, cousins and relatives."

The award will remind the hospital's staff about the "quality of the care they render, their professionalism, their passion and their pride in their work of caring for our wounded warriors," he said.

Although the hospital staff treats the wounded Soldiers, the Fisher House is an essential part of a Soldier's overall care and treatment, Gamble said.

"They offer such a generous and unique service to families in their time of need, taking the burden from them as they help their wounded and sick here at Landstuhl," Gamble said. "I can't emphasize enough how vital their efforts are in helping us with being the quality care givers that we are."

"To have this outpouring of love come back to us and to be able to see our Soldiers getting their lives back together with their families is very emotional," Gregory said after the ceremony. "The medallion from the Canadian Forces is incredibly special to us. We will hang it with pride inside the Fisher House for everyone to see."

There are 35 Fisher Houses located near major military and Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers in the United States and at Landstuhl. They provide temporary accommodations to families of patients receiving medical care.

NEWS

Fuel card slated to replace coupons in Germany

By Jack L. Gillund

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, in cooperation with officials from IMCOM-Europe and USAREUR, recently announced that it is working with the German government to replace fuel coupons with a fuel-card system in fiscal year 2008.

"The German Treasury Department requested that the U.S. Forces replace the current paper-based fuel coupon system to decrease the volume of tax fraud" said Lt. Col. Carol McKinney, U.S. Army Europe provost marshal chief of law enforcement.

The fuel-purchase program was discussed with U.S. military commanders in Germany last week during the U.S. Army European Command's Quality of Life Conference in Garmisch, Germany. AAFES officials explained how fuel cards

will make purchasing and ration control of tax- and duty-free fuel at ESSO and AAFES gas stations easier, faster and more convenient.

"AAFES has coordinated the fuel-card project with U.S. Forces' key staff agencies to ensure that the design complies with the status of forces agreement and the requirements of the German Treasury Department" said Wess Bryan, Fuel Card Program manager for AAFES. "During this process, customer input from authorized U.S. forces personnel has helped us make sure that the fuel card best supports customer needs."

The fuel card will resemble a prepaid debit card that authorized customers will be able to use for fuel at ESSO and AAFES gas stations throughout Germany, Bryan said. Fuel cards will be issued for use only with a specific vehicle. A maxi-

mum of three fuel cards will be issued for a vehicle. No more than five drivers will be authorized to purchase fuel for that vehicle.

Now nearing the end of the planning phase, the fuel-card program is expected to take 10 to 12 months to develop. Testing is scheduled to start in September. The German government must then approve the fuel-card system before it can be implemented. AAFES expects the first group of cards to be mailed to eligible personnel in March 2008.

"Once implemented, the automated fuel card program will allow authorized personnel to purchase tax- and duty-free gasoline in Germany," McKinney said. "At the same time, the fuel card program will provide a more efficient method to prevent tax-fraud."

Schedule Announced for Release of Tax Statements

By American Forces Press Service

Service members, military retirees and annuitants, and federal civilian employees paid by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service can expect to receive their 2006 tax statements beginning this month, DFAS officials announced today.

DFAS customers with access to the secure, Web-based "myPay" system will be able to retrieve their tax statements electronically up to two weeks sooner than those relying on regular mail delivery, officials said.

The myPay system includes layers of defense against identity theft, officials noted, adding that its technology meets or exceeds security requirements in private industry worldwide.

"Tax statements are available online, allowing customers to view and print W2s and 1099Rs. Whether anyone needs the statements to complete taxes or just want an extra copy for their records, the tax statements can be accessed and printed at any time," Patrick Shine, DFAS

operations director,

said. "The printable statements are approved by the Internal Revenue Service."

Here are projected distribution dates for DFAS customers' tax statements:

- ♦ Retiree Annual Statement: Available on myPay Dec. 9, mailed via U.S.
- ♦ Postal Service Dec. 16-31;
- ♦ Retiree 1099R: Available on myPay Dec. 15, mailed Dec. 16-31;
- ♦ Annuitant Account Statement: Available on myPay Dec. 18, mailed Dec. 19-31;
- ♦ Annuitant 1099R: Available on myPay Dec. 18, mailed Dec. 19-31;
- ♦ VSI/SSB W-2: Not available on myPay, mailed Jan. 4-5;
- ♦ Active Duty Air Force, Army, Navy W-2: Available on myPay Jan. 22, mailed Jan. 23-29;
- ♦ Reserve Air Force, Army, Navy W-2: Available on myPay Jan. 2, mailed Jan. 5-8;
- ♦ Marine Corps active and reserve W-2: Available on myPay Jan. 5, mailed

Jan. 9-10;

- ♦ Civilian employee W-2: Available on myPay Jan. 9, mailed Jan. 11-18;
- ♦ Savings Deposit Program 1099INT: Available on myPay Jan. 19, mailed Jan. 19-20; and
- ♦ Vendor Pay 1099: Not available on myPay, mailed Jan. 27-31.

Shine added that current myPay account holders can eliminate the costs associated with generating and distributing the tax statements immediately by signing up and using myPay. A personal identification number, or PIN, is required to use the system, and eligible users can apply for one at the myPay Web site, <http://www.mypay.dfas.mil>.

Users with military e-mail addresses -addresses in the .mil domain -- or a pre-registered personal e-mail address can receive their new PIN via e-mail.

All others will receive their new PIN via mail in about 10 working days from the date of request, officials said.

Customers who already had obtained a PIN but have forgotten it can apply for a new one at the myPay site.

LEGAL

Time to consider 2007 TSP, TSP-C Contributions

Although there is no longer an open season for TSP, now is the time for employees to consider their 2007 TSP contributions.

Employees who wish to contribute up to the 2007 IRS limit on elective deferrals for regular TSP contributions (\$15,500) and TSP Catch-Up (TSP-C) (\$5,000), and are paid by DFAS Denver or Charleston (OA or FA) should make their election(s) during THIS pay period (26 Nov - 9 Dec 06) if they wish to extend the contributions over the maximum number of pay periods in 2007.

For those employees paid by DFAS Pensacola (PE), the first pay period to make TSP election(s) for 2007 will be 10-23 Dec 06.

Employees who are at least age 50 (including those who will reach age 50 in 2007) may make TSP-C contributions if otherwise eligible. Employees must make the regular TSP contribution of \$15,500 in order to make TSP-C contributions (maximum contribution is \$5,000 for 2007). For more information about TSP-C contributions, please see the TSP Fact Sheet at <http://www.tsp.gov/forms/oc03-03.pdf>.

Later elections will increase the

biweekly contribution amount(s) for employees who wish to meet either or both personal contribution goals as there will be fewer pay periods in which to make contributions.

The Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) has prepared contribution charts

(for both regular and TSP-C contributions) for employees paid by DFAS

Denver/Charleston and for those paid by DFAS Pensacola.

The chart for regular employee contributions can be found on the ABC-C website - link below. The chart for TSP-C contributions can be found at the attachment and will soon be on the ABC-C web site.

All TSP contribution election changes are made via the ABC-C web or phone

system (<https://www.abc.army.mil> or 1-877-276-9287).

From the ABC-C website:

The maximum amount you can contribute in year 2007 to TSP is \$15,500 for regular contributions and \$5,000 for TSP

Catch-Up (TSPC). TSP and TSPC

contributions can be started, changed or stopped at any time. Be aware that

if the amount you elect to contribute exceeds the amount of your net pay for

a particular pay period, no regular TSP or TSPC deductions will be taken

from your check for that pay period. You may also receive an extremely

small pay check if you elect a large contribution in error. Please ensure

your election is the amount of money per pay period that you wish to

contribute. If you do not intend on contributing the maximum of \$15,500 to

your TSP account, you are not eligible to contribute to TSPC.

To view a chart to assist you in planning your regular TSP contributions if you desire to reach the maximum of \$15,500 during 2007, please click on your

servicing payroll office:

<https://www.abc.army.mil/Information/ABCTSP/Information/HowtoDetermineTheBiWeeklyAmountforTSPfor2007.htm>

AFNORTH H.S. Important Dates

Dec. 22 school lets out at 12:25 (only periods 1-4)

School resumes Monday, Jan. 8, 2007

January 8 - 12 is review week so make sure ALL are in school. Bad time for absences!

January 8-12 is schedule change week. See your counselor! Schedules will change on the 22nd.

Friday, Jan. 19- NO SCHOOL

Jan. 22 Semester- second semester begins. Schedule changes take effect.

Exam Schedule

Monday, Jan. 15: Period 4 Exam-1:30 - 3:30 (schedule will be period 1, period 2, seminar, lunch and then exam 4)

Tuesday, Jan. 16: Period 6 Exam-10:15-12:15; and Period 2 Exam -1:30-3:30 (schedule will be seminar, exam 6, lunch, exam 2)

Wednesday, Jan. 17: Period 7 Exam- 10:15-12:15; and Period 3 Exam -1:30 -3:30 (schedule will be seminar, exam 7, lunch, exam 3)

Thursday, Jan. 18: Period 1 Exam- 10:15-12:15; and Period 5 Exam - 1:30 - 3:30 (schedule will be seminar, exam 1, lunch, exam 5)

Tax Planning Now will Lead to Faster Refunds

By NELC

U.S. taxpayers living overseas have until June 15th to file their tax returns, so it may seem too early to start thinking about taxes. However, taxpayers can take some simple steps now to make life a lot easier when filing their taxes for tax year 2006.

Collecting the necessary forms and documentation is the most time-consuming step of tax return preparation. Taxpayers who start collecting their information now will benefit by enjoying their refund checks much more quickly.

1. Gather Necessary Financial Documents. The most important document for filing an income tax return is the W-2 Form. The W-2 is a statement the employer sends to the taxpayer, listing the total income earned and tax withheld. Employers mail W-2s in January. W-2s for military pay will also be available on-line at MyPay. Most taxpayers will also receive a Form 1099-INT from their bank, which lists interest earned from savings accounts. Keep in mind that there are other forms for different types of income. All such forms and financial records should be kept in a file that is clearly marked.

2. Obtain a Power of Attorney from Your Spouse. If you are filing a joint return with your spouse, you will both need to sign the tax form. However, many overseas taxpayers have spouses still living in the United States. Even if you and your spouse are living apart, you may

still file a joint return. Taxpayers may sign tax returns for their spouses, but only if they have a valid Power of Attorney from their spouse granting them permission. This should be a Special Power of Attorney that specifically grants the power to sign 2005 joint tax returns or a completed and signed IRS Form 2848.

3. Obtain Social Security Numbers and Taxpayer Identification Numbers. All taxpayers and dependents listed on a tax form need either a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). All United States citizens and residents eligible for SSNs must have one prior to filing tax returns. You can get a SSN by filing out Form SS-5 with the Social Security Administration.

If you recently changed your name, you must continue to file your taxes under your former name until your SSN is updated to reflect your name change. You can use Form SS-5 to correct your name on the Social Security Card as well. Form SS-5 and instructions can be found on-line at www.ssa.gov.

Not all taxpayers and dependents are eligible for a SSN. Nonresident aliens included on a tax form must have ITINs instead. There are two ways to get an ITIN: one involves writing and requesting the number and it takes 4-6 weeks to be issued, and the other can be done by preparing a W-7 Form and attaching it to this year's returns. One may not, however, e-file in the year one requests an ITIN. Both methods of receiving

an ITIN require that you call the legal assistance office for details and instructions as well as have access to original documents needed for the processing. ITIN cards are no longer being used. Tax forms and instructions are also found on-line at www.irs.gov.

4. Obtain Proof to Claim a Dependent. Only one taxpayer may claim a dependent for any single tax year. Parents filing separate returns may both wish to claim their children on their tax returns. The IRS will assume the parent with physical custody is entitled to claim their children on their tax returns. The non-custodial parent may claim the child's exemption instead, but only with supporting documentation. Such proof could be a Form 8332 or similar signed document from the custodial parent or a final divorce decree giving the non-custodial parent the unconditional right to claim the child's exemption.

Taxpayers with tax related questions or problems should contact their nearest legal assistance office either at The Netherlands Law Center in Treebeek, the Netherlands, or The Northern Law Center at SHAPE, Belgium. Beginning in February, both Law Centers will also be offering tax preparation services free of charge to service members, military retirees, DA civilians, DOD contractors and their dependents. However, before taking advantage of this great service in February, make sure you have all necessary documents which may require action now.

Stolen Vehicles: Personnel Claims Act and Private Insurance

By NELC

Although uncommon, stolen vehicles are an unfortunate part of life for some soldiers overseas. Luckily, the Personnel Claims Act AR 27-20, the claims system which compensates you for the loss or damage to your POV or household goods during shipment, is provided to assist the soldier and help lessen the hardships of having your vehicle stolen.

In order to be eligible for the possible compensation there are a few requirements to keep in mind. First and foremost, the loss must have been while used incident to service and used in performance of military duty. In addition, the PCA will consider compensation if your vehicle was stolen while parked at your quarters or place of lodging or while on a military installation. "Quarters" includes garages, carports, driveways, assigned parking spaces and lots specially provided and used for the purpose of parking at one's quarters. A vehicle that is properly on the installation or quarters is presumed to be incident of service unless particular circumstances occur such as visiting a soldier while on leave.

The Personnel Claims Act is a gratuitous and voluntary statute designed to compensate you for losses incident to your military service. It does not however, provide full insurance coverage nor is it a substitute for private insurance. Congress instead determined to provide compensation for personal property losses attributable to special circumstances surrounding military service or

employment.

Coverage under the Personnel Claims Act is different from insurance coverage. Insurance coverage is contractual: you pay a certain amount of money (the premium) to your insurance company and the insurance company agrees to compensate you if your property is lost, damaged or stolen. The amount of money you pay for your premium is based upon what type of coverage you elect. On the other hand, soldiers don't pay premiums for coverage under the personnel Claims Act: coverage is automatic for losses incident to military service.

Specifically, the Personnel Claims Act provides coverage limited to the substantiated value of an item at the time of its loss, damage or destruction. When determining how much compensation a soldier might receive, the Army considers: replacement costs, Allowance List Depreciation Guides, and how much the soldier has already received from their insurance company. Therefore, it is very important to have good coverage from a private insurance company as the Personnel Claims Act is provided to assist, not replace private coverage.

In the unfortunate event that your vehicle is stolen, a claimant should contact the Netherlands Law Center to determine if the Personnel Claims Act will help compensate for the loss of your vehicle.

LEISURE

Leisure Activities ~ by Rita Hoefnagels

Through Dec. 21: *Christmas Market* at historic Römerberg, Paulsplatz and Mainkai in the center of Frankfurt am Main (GER). Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at Market Square in the center of Heinsberg (GER), open daily noon-8 p.m.

Dec. 22: *Artisan Christmas Market* at Rue Delville in Esneux. Open: 3-9 p.m. The market features gastronomic products, carriage rides, tasting sessions and Santa will be present as well.

Through Dec. 22: *Christmas Market* at several locations in Heidelberg (GER), open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Kaiserslautern (K-Town) in Germany, open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Medieval Christmas Market at Market Square in the center of Siegburg (GER) open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Enchanting *Christmas Market* at the medieval market in front of the imposing cathedral in the center of Trier (GER). Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.

Dec. 23: *Christmas Market* at Church Square in the center of Putte. Market starts at 5 p.m. and the *Fireworks* at 10:30 p.m.

Christmas Market at Münsterplatz, Botterplatz and Friedensplatz in the center of Bonn (GER), open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Brühl (GER), open: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market at Neumarkt and Alter Markt in the center of Cologne (GER). Around the Imhoff-Stollwerck-chocolademuseum (chocolate museum) one will find a *Medieval Christmas Market* and a *Fairy Tale Christmas Market* at Rudolfplatz. Open: 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Special is the *Floating Christmas Market*. On board of the "MS Wappen von Mainz" you can browse for presents at the more than 40 stands and enjoy a glass of wine and the view of the Old Town and the cathedral. The "MS Wappen von Mainz" can be found in the Old Town near the Cologne philharmonic orchestra house. Open: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Dortmund (GER). This is one of Germany's largest and most beautiful Christmas Markets. Open: Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, noon-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at Boulevard Königsstrasse in the center of Duisburg (GER). Open: Sundays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Nov. 26, 6-9 p.m.

Romantic *Nikolausmarkt* at Market Square in the old historic center of Düsseldorf (GER). Open: Sundays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Fridays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

International Christmas Market in the center of Essen (GER) with 265 stands and a beautiful 18 meter high Christmas tree. Open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market in the center of Krefeld (GER). Open 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market in the beautiful and attractive old city of Hameln (GER). The city's restored timber houses and elegant historic buildings are a perfect background for the Christmas market. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Christmas Market at Königsplatz and Friedrichsplatz in the center of Kassel (GER). Kassel is the hometown

of two brothers – The Grimm Brothers famous for their fairy tales. It is therefore that visitors will find a unique market here: a *Fairy Tale Christmas Market*. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Floating Christmas Market in Maastricht (NL). Stiphout Shipping Company's largest ship, which can be found at the Maaspromenade, is in this period the location of a Christmas Market. The ship is decorated for Christmas and features all kind of attractive stands with traditional and typical Christmas items. There is no entrance fee and the market is open during normal shopping hours.

Christmas Market in the center of Mannheim (GER), open: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Fair at the historic Market Square against the imposing back-drop of the over thousand year old Cathedral in the center of Mainz (GER). Open: Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sundays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at the romantic market square in the center of Monschau (GER). The market is **only** open on Fridays, 2-8 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Münchner Christkindlmarkt (Christmas Market) at several locations in the center of München (GER).

Christmas Market outside Europe's largest mall in Oberhausen (Germany). Open Sundays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

Lucrezia Market, a special market with cute wooden stands filled with charming art and crafts and all kinds of delicatessen at Haidplatz and Kohlenmarkt in Regensburg (GER). Open: daily 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

Christmas Market of Nations in the historical and romantic old quarters of Rüdesheim (GER). About 120 stands in the center of the city represent 12 nations. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Twinkling Star Market at Schlossplatz in Wiesbaden (GER). The idyllic square with the historic city palace is a real atmospheric location for the Christmas market. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Sundays, noon-9 p.m.

Christmas Market at the historic Lady Mary Chapel (Marienkapelle) and Falkenhaus square in the center of Würzburg (GER). A beautiful *Christmas Art Market* can be found at the inner court of the old Ratskeller on Domstrasse. Open daily 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Through Dec. 23 & Dec. 27-30: *Christmas Fair* in the center of Bielefeld. Open: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.

Through Dec. 24: *Christmas Market* with 150 stands displaying products at the foot of the City Hall in the center of Augsburg. Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m.; Sundays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Dec. 24, 26, 27 and 31: *Old-fashioned steam train rides with Christmas and New Years*. During these days one can enjoy a ride in the old-fashioned steam train (called Million Line) through the winter scenery from Simpelveld to Schin op Geul. Sitting on the plush couches in a attractive decorated first-class coach, you'll travel through the hills of Limburg. The train-stations are nicely decorated and the offered glühwein or hot chocolate with Christmas and champagne for New Year are what you need. Round-trip tickets for these special rides cost €10; children (5-12) €5. Start from the Simpelveld Station is at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. From the Schin op Geul Station you'll leave at 10:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 2:45 p.m., and 4:45 p.m. On Sunday Dec. 31, the last trains will leave at 2 and 2:45 p.m. Reservations can

be made by calling 0031-(0)45-5688120 Tuesdays-Fridays during office hours. Special is the culinary coach, open during Dec. 24, 26 and 31. In this coach an afternoon-tea will be served to passengers. The Christmas-tea-train starts from Station Simpelveld on Dec. 24 and 26 at noon and 2 p.m. and on Dec. 31 at noon. Costs are €30 and reservations are required.

Dec. 25-30: *Christmas Country* at Veemarkt Hallen in Utrecht. Christmas Country is actually the largest indoor amusement park in the Netherlands with circus; fair; attractions; rides; shows and lots more. Open: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Entry: €13.

Dec. 26-30: *Winter Evenings* at Open Air Museum in Bokrijk. This is an ideal family outing to an enchanting, magical and mysterious place. Entry: €2.50. Open: 4-9 p.m.

Through Dec. 30: *Christmas Village* at Place de Marché and Place Saint Lambert in Liège (BE) has become one of the largest and most attractive fairs in Belgium. "Village de Noël" is a festive and friendly Belgian mix of Alsatian and German Christmas ingredients.

Christmas Market in the old historic center of Lübeck. The city's several Christmas and Art Markets make it worth a visit. Market at Rathausmarkt, Koberg and Breite Strasse is open Mondays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-8 p.m.; the *Christmas Fairy Tale Market* at Hinter dem Rathaus is open daily 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; the *Christmas Art Fair* at Heiligen-Geist-Hospital (Holy Ghost Hospital) is open 10:30 a.m.-7 p.m., Entry €2; the *Historic Medieval Christmas Market* can be found at Marienkirchhof and is open daily 11 a.m.-9 p.m.; another *Christmas Art Fair* can be found in the St. Petri Church, open daily 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Entry €2; the *Christmas Bazaar* at Niederegger on Breite Strasse. Open: Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Through Dec. 31: *Christmas Market* in the center of Berlin. The capital of Germany has many Christmas Markets and events. All are open daily 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Through Jan. 1: *Winter Wonders* in Brussels (BE). Open: Mondays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; Fridays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. The ice-skating rink is open daily till 10 p.m.

Through Jan. 7: *Christmas at Palace "Het Loo"* near Apeldoorn where visitors will get a glimpse of what Christmas used to be like with the Dutch Royal Family for the past 300 years. Open: Tuesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Mondays and Jan. 1. Entry: €9; children (6-17) €3.

Winterwonderland at the castle and gardens of Arcen. This scenic and enchanting event takes place in the beautiful scenery of wonderful gardens. Open: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Entry: €12.50; children (4-14) €6. Take N271 Venlo-Nijmegen. Watch for "Kasteeltuinen" signs.

Winterland in the center of Maastricht (NL). The Vrijthof in the center of Maastricht is transformed into a large ice-skating rink. **through Dec. 23** you will find a Christmas Market in the surrounding streets, daily open 11 a.m.-9 p.m., on Fridays and Saturdays the market is open till 10 p.m.

Christmas at the Train Station. The beautiful illuminated coaches and the festively decorated platforms are a perfect setting for this Christmas event. Open: Dec. 15-23, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Dec. 24-Jan. 7, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Entry: €12.50; children (3-12) €9.50. Information: 0031-(0)30-2306213.

SCHINNEN NOTES

Boys & Girls Club of USAG Schinnen to participate in National Fine Arts Program

By Peter Iedema

The Boys & Girls Clubs of USAG Schinnen is one of more than 4,400 across the country joining in a search to identify talented young artists through a National Fine Arts Exhibit program competition.

BGCA's National Fine Arts Exhibit program is a comprehensive initiative promoting young people's creativity and encouraging artistic skills and cultural enrichment.

As a participant in the National Fine Arts Exhibit program, the Boys & Girls Club of USAG Schinnen may submit members' artwork in four age divisions and 10 categories, including watercolor, pastel, oil, acrylic and collage. The entries will

be on display in the Schinnen Bowling Center, Jan.3-12.

Selected artwork will be screened at the regional level by art instructors from AFNORTH International School and Youth Services and the winners will have their artwork sent to BGCA's Atlanta headquarters for judging at the national level. Thirty-seven national winners will be named and their artwork will be displayed at special events throughout the year.

Winning artists will also receive an engraved plaque and letter of congratulations from BGCA President Roxanne Spillelt. Regional finalists will receive a certificate of participation.

"By introducing members to Fine Arts, we are giving them the priceless opportunity to express themselves in creative and unusual ways," said Peter Iedema (Fine Arts Club Advisor), Youth Services. "The Boys & Girls Club support will enable members to maximize their artistic talents and develop creative thinking to last a lifetime."

Located in building H 603, JFC Brunssum, Youth Services has served the youth of tri-border for decades. Youth Services continues to provide excellent programs for our youth in the areas of character and leadership development, education enhancement, career preparation, health and life skills, the arts and sports, fitness and recreation.

HOLIDAY SERVICES

DATE	TIME	TYPE OF SERVICE	LOCATION	ON/OFF-POST
Dec. 10	5:00 p.m.	International Carol Service	JFC Brunssum Chapel	ON
		CATHOLIC		
Dec 9	5:00 p.m.	Barn Mass	Schimmert	OFF
Dec. 24	5:00 p.m.	Family Mass	JFC Brunssum GK Chapel	ON
Dec 24	Midnight	Midnight Mass	GK Chapel	ON
Dec. 25	noon	Catholic Mass	JFC Brunssum East Chapel	ON
		PROTESTANT		
Dec. 24	7:00 p.m.	Candlelight Service	JFC Brunssum East Chapel	ON

SCHINNEN NOTES

Schinnen Community Update

BOSS NYE Party The BOSS Eve Before New Year's Eve Party Comes Saturday, Dec. 30 to the Schinnen Sports Center on USAG Schinnen. Join BOSS for a BIG party with a DJ, Dancing, Food, Card Games, and tryouts for the USAFE X-Box Tournament in January. Doors open at 9 p.m. and admission is FREE.

Open to all US/NATO ID cardholders and their guests. Hosted by BOSS and Project CHEER For more information, please call 0049 2451-99-3378.

Use or Lose Annual Leave The 2006 annual leave year will end on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2007. Employees who have accrued annual leave in excess of the maximum carry-over authorized (use or lose) will forfeit the excess leave they have accrued at the close of business on that date.

Except for an emergency situation there should be no employees who have to forfeit unused annual leave.

Dancing Fun Do you or your child want to learn how to ballet or dance the flamingo, then sign up for dancing fun today! Classes begin Jan. 8. Sign up in the JFC Brunssum Gymnasium upper room (3rd floor) or call CER at 045-563-6221 for more information.

Headquarter step work In the period of Dec. 11-21, the steps at the front and back entrance of the USAG Schinnen HQ Building will be renovated. Work will start at the front entrance during which time the entrance may be closed. As soon as the front entrance is finished, the back entrance will be closed. We apologize for the inconvenience.

YS Boxing Two Youth Services boxing classes will begin Jan. 19 in the HQ JFC Brunssum Fitness Center. The first is for beginners, ages 11 through 18 for 15 weeks of instruction. Sessions will be on Fridays, 4 - 5:20 p.m. At the conclusion of the class, each participant will receive an official boxing pin from the German Boxing Federation. The second class is for Masters or participants who have already completed the Beginners Class. It, too, runs 15 weeks, 5:30 - 6:45, and is for ages 12 through 18.

Good news! Both classes feature newly purchased professional boxing equipment. You must be registered with YS before you can participate. For full details, please call DSN 364-3008 or CIV 045 526-3595.

TIER III Closed From Dec. 15, 2006 until Jan. 2, 2007 the TIER III helpdesk in Schinnen - The Netherlands is closed. In case you need to get support on TIER III, please do contact the Wuerzburg help desk at DSN 350-7504 or send them an email at the following address; maintdesk@cmtymail.98asg.army.mil

Bowling Center Information Beginning Dec. 20, the Bowling Center including the Pin Point Café and Harry's BBQ, will be open Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. It will be closed December 24-26 and December 31 through January 2. Cosmic bowling has permanently moved to Saturday nights beginning at 6 p.m.

TDY Orders and approval Please ensure you have notified all USAG Schinnen soldiers and civilians that when routing your

TDY orders they must be accompanied by the travelers up to date **anti-terrorism level one training** certificate. To complete the training go to <https://atlevel1.dtic.mil/at/>. Your orders will not be approved through the AT/FP Officer without the certificate.

AFAP Conference 2007 You've lived in different places and have different experiences and AFAP wants to capture your knowledge....

Make the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) aware of how the Army could improve well being locally as well as nationally by writing an issue of concern or improvement for Schinnen, Europe, or the overall Army.

Our upcoming February 2007 Conference will have delegates work on your issue as well as others in an effort to increase overall Army Community well being.

Look for the orange cardboard boxes issue boxes near our community AFAP Poster, "A World of Experience Within Our Community", and fill out a form or email us at ACS-Schinnen@Eur.Army.mil. Call ACS at 443-7500.

FEHB Open Season

TSC Treebeek will be closed on following days:

Dec. 15

Dec. 21 (12:00)-Dec 27 ;

Dec. 29-Jan. 3.

Only for emergency issues you can call 361-5238.

Dental/Vision enrollment extended OPM has decided to extend the open season for federal employees to enroll in a FEDVIP dental and/or vision plan through 22 December 2006.

NELC Holiday Hours The Netherlands Law Center will be closed on Dec. 25

and 26 for a USAREUR training holiday. The law center will also be closed on Jan. 1 and Jan. 2 for a USAREUR training holiday.

Daily hours of operation will be from 8:00-4:00 during the holiday season, Dec. 18, 2006 – Jan. 2, 2007.

The Treebeek Education Center will be closed from Dec. 22 – Jan. 1 for the holidays. Course registration for Term III will be Jan. 2 – 12 2007. Visit the Treebeek Education Center web page at https://www.earmyu.com/public/facility_pages/Netherlands_Treebeek_Geo_Ed_Center/default.asp for a complete listing of the courses being offered locally in Term III.

MWR Trips and Tours New Trips for 2007:

Feb 9-12: **Valentines Weekend in Paris** (register with full payment by Dec. 30)

March 10: **Bruges, Belgium** (register with full payment March 7)

April 13-16: **Munich, Germany** register with full payment by March 2)

April 28: **Keukenhof Gardens**, register with full payment by April 21)

SCHINNEN NOTES



SAS Winter Break Camp
USAG Schinnen
27 Dec. - 5 Jan. 07

**REGISTRATION WITH CHILD AND
 YOUTH SERVICES (CYS) IS REQUIRED.**

Open Daily from 0700-1800

**Weekly fees are based upon CYS Fee Categories (Cat 1 to Cat 6) and
 range from \$36-\$94. Hourly rate is \$3.00 an hour.**

Come join in on the fun and participate in our daily activities. We have it all! Arts and Crafts, computer lab., homework lab., games... We also have a few fun-filled special activities lined up. These special activities featured below are the highlights of the week.

!!!Please pay close attention to the dates!!!

CLOSED

25 & 26 Dec. 06 and 1 Jan. 07



Wednesday, 27 Dec.
Fun activities at SAS



!!!Friday, 29 Dec. 06 & Tuesday, 2 Jan. 07!!!
JFC Gym, 1000-1130



Wednesday, 3 Jan.
Ice Skating, 1000-1600
Geleen, NL



!!!Thursday, 28 Dec. 06 & 4 Jan. 07!!!
Cooking Club Activities



Friday, 5 January 2007
Tropical Pool, 0900-1800
Peer, Belgium



SCHINNEN NOTES



US A G Schinnen Holiday Hours

AAFES Holiday Hours

December 7, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (tree lighting)

December 18, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

December 24, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 25, Closed

December 31, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

January 1, 2007 CLOSED (PX/PXTRA)

Shoppette 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CAR CARE REGULAR HOURS

Commissary Holiday Hours

December 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

December 25, Closed

Community Bank

December 25, Closed

December 26, Closed

Andrews Federal Credit Union

December 25, Closed

Merry Christmas from US A G Schinnen
Your Happy Holiday "Community of Choice"

SCHINNEN NOTES

DMWR Christmas Holiday Operating Hours

MWR Holiday Hours Approved 30 Nov 06	Weekdays	Weekend	Holidays
	Mon - Fri & Mon - Fri	Saturday & Sunday	Monday & Tuesday
	18 - 22 Dec and 25 - 29 Dec	23/24 Dec & 30/31 Dec	25/26 Dec & 1 Jan
Function			
DMWR Admin Offices including VAT office	18 - 22 Dec - 0800 - 1700 25 & 26 Dec - Closed 27 - 29 Dec - 0800 - 1700 (VAT until 1630)	23-24 Dec - Closed 30-31 Dec - Closed	25 & 26 Dec - Closed 1 Jan - Closed
Fitness Center including Equip Check Out	18-22 Dec 0900-1700 25 Dec Closed 26-29 Dec 0900-1700	23-24 Dec 0900-1700 30-31 Dec 0900-1700	25 Dec - Closed 26 Dec 0900-1700 1 Jan - Closed
Bowling Center	18-19 closed (reg schedule) 20-22 Dec 1100-1800 27-29 Dec 1100-1800	23 Dec - 1100-1800 24 Dec - Closed 30 Dec - 1100-1800	25-26 Dec - Closed 1-2 Jan - Closed (regular hours)
Pin Point Café	18-19 closed (reg schedule) 20-22 Dec 1100-1800 27-29 Dec 1100-1800	23 Dec - 1100-1800 24 Dec - Closed 30 Dec - 1100-1800 31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec - Closed 1-2 Jan - Closed
Harry's BBQ	18 Dec - Closed 19 Dec - 1100-1400 20-22 Dec - 1100-1800 25-26 Dec - Closed 27-29 Dec 1100-1800	23 Dec 1100-1800 24 Dec - Closed 30 Dec - 1100-1800 31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec - Closed 1-2 Jan - Closed
Army Community Service	18 - 22 Dec - 0800 - 1700 25 & 26 Dec - Closed 27 - 29 Dec - 0800 - 1700	23-24 Dec - Closed 30-31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec Closed 1 Jan - Closed
CYS Registration Office	18 - 22 Dec - 0800 - 1700 25 & 26 Dec - Closed 27 - 29 Dec - 0800 - 1700 (1500-1700 by appt. only)	23-24 Dec - Closed 30-31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec Closed 1 Jan - Closed
CDC/SAS Facility	18 - 22 Dec 0700 - 1800 CDC 18-22 Dec B/A School SAS 25-26 Dec - Closed 27 - 29 Dec - 0700 - 1800	23-24 Dec - Closed 30-31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec - Closed 1 Jan - Closed
Youth Center (YS)	18 - 22 Dec - 0800 - 1800 25-26 Dec - Closed 27 - 29 Dec - 0800 - 1800	23-24 Dec - Closed 30-31 Dec - Closed	25-26 Dec - Closed 1 Jan - Closed 2-5 Jan - 0800 - 1800

SCHINNEN NOTES



*On behalf of USAG Schinnen Public
Affairs*

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
2007!*